

CHURCH SAYS SOVIET TESTS U.S. RESOLVE ON TROOPS IN CUBA

ASKS IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL

He Asserts Insufficient Response by Administration Could Lead to 'Further Adventurism'

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 9 — Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said today that an insufficient Administration response to the presence of Soviet combat troops in Cuba would invite "further adventurism" by the Soviet Union in Latin America and other areas.

The relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, Mr. Church said, was now "riding at stake" over the disclosure that the troops were in Cuba, and he called for their immediate withdrawal.

"It's a test," Mr. Church said in a telephone interview. "The Russians deployed a combat brigade secretly in Cuba, attempted to conceal its presence, but they knew the brigade would be discovered by us. They're testing our resolve."

"We must decide where to draw the line against the deployment of Soviet combat troops. If not in Cuba, where would it be?"

Vance to Meet Dobrynin

Although President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance, in their public statements, have avoided calling for the withdrawal of the Soviet brigade, Mr. Vance is expected to do so tomorrow when he meets with the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin. Mr. Dobrynin returned to the United States today from a vacation in the Soviet Union that was extended because of his father's death.

In the interview, as well as in an appearance earlier on CBS's "Face the Nation," Mr. Church, Democrat of Idaho, said, "It is my assessment of the mood of the senate that the SALT treaty will not get the necessary two-thirds majority unless these troops are removed."

"I think they must be withdrawn," he added. "That would be the only satisfactory outcome."

President Carter said over the weekend that the strategic-arms treaty should be approved by the Senate "on its own merits" without any link to Soviet activity in Cuba or elsewhere.

New Details Emerge

Meanwhile, further details emerged today of how the Administration learned of the presence of the troops and how it informed key public officials, including Mr. Church.

Mr. Church broke the news of the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba at a news conference in Boise, Idaho, on Aug. 30. In the interview today, he said that Senator Richard Stone, Democrat of Florida, had initially raised the possibility that combat troops were in Cuba at hearings of the Foreign Relations Committee on July 17 and that intelligence and defense officials at the time had said that there was "no evidence" to indicate their presence.

"I issued a public statement," Mr. Church said. "Then on Aug. 30, Dave Newsom told me that our intelligence confirmed the presence of a combat brigade in Cuba." Mr. Newsom is Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

Mr. Church added: "Having denied it publicly on the basis of information I received in July, I felt I was obliged to make the truth public." Mr. Church said he had advised Secretary of State Vance that he planned to announce the presence of the Soviet brigade in Cuba.

According to Mr. Church, Mr. Vance told him, "I know you'll use your best judgment."

Intelligence officials, meanwhile, confirmed published reports today that the Soviet troops were sighted on Aug. 17 by United States satellite cameras. Several days earlier, according to the reports, United States intelligence officials had been advised that Soviet combat troops stationed near Havana had planned maneuvers in the area.

On Aug. 20, another satellite mission over Cuba found further evidence of the Soviet brigade.

Intelligence officials have said that there was reason to believe that a Soviet combat force had served quietly in Cuba for years, perhaps as far back as 1962 when Moscow placed offensive nuclear weapons in Cuba that were eventually

withdrawn during the Cuban missile crisis.

Former President Gerald R. Ford said yesterday that he resented allegations that Soviet troops had been in Cuba before he left office in January 1977. In a speech in Atlanta, the former President said he doubted that United States intelligence during his Administration had been so poor that it would have missed "such a major development."

Troops Operate Discreetly

According to intelligence officials, the Soviet Union went to unusual lengths to camouflage the presence of their ground troops in Cuba. It has never publicly mentioned the troops, who serve two to three year tours and who are divided between two locations resembling Cuban camps near Los Palacios, 60 miles west of Havana.

Intelligence officials said that the Soviet troops operated discreetly, rarely conducting field maneuvers or engaging in elaborate communications contacts.

They also said that United States concern over the shipment of Soviet MIG-23's to Cuba prompted Mr. Carter late in 1978 to order the first photo reconnaissance planes over the island since 1977. The overflights were sporadic and were not continued regularly.

Earlier this year, according to Administration officials, American signal and photo intelligence picked up hints indicating the presence of a Soviet brigade, but the evidence touched off a dispute in the intelligence community. By July, Army Intelligence officials as well as the National Security Agency insisted that the accumulation of data made it plain that Soviet ground troops were in Cuba. Other intelligence agencies disagreed.

Carter Orders Surveillance

By mid-July, according to intelligence officials, President Carter had sent a memorandum to Adm. Stansfield Turner, the director of Central Intelligence, ordering increased intelligence surveillance of Cuba to determine whether or not the Soviet Union had placed ground troops there.

An Administration official said that Mr. Carter and others had grown especially concerned about Cuba, and Latin America, in view of the collapse of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua and the prospect of general turmoil in the area.

At this point Senator Stone, whose constituency in Florida includes a sizable Cuban population, asked defense and intelligence officials about rumors of a Soviet brigade on the island.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown as well as Mr. Vance reported that there was no evidence of a "substantial increase" in the size of the Soviet military presence in Cuba, which has been made up of advisers for years.

"Our intelligence," Mr. Brown said, "does not warrant the conclusion that there are any other significant Soviet military forces in Cuba."